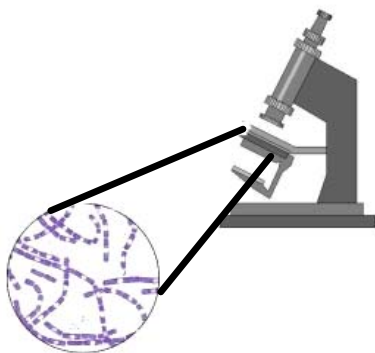


## What is Anthrax?

Anthrax is an infectious disease caused by the spore-forming bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. *Bacillus anthracis* has caused disease for centuries. Typically, infection comes from contact with anthrax-infected animals. It is found most frequently in the developing world.

The tiny spores are found in soil throughout the world and can live for many years. Therefore, animals that feed on the ground are most likely to become infected. These animals include cows, sheep, and goats.

Most commonly, people exposed through their work, such as farmers, veterinarians, and butchers, contract anthrax.



If you have questions,  
call your health care provider or  
The Hawai'i State Department of Health

Oahu: 586-8352

Big Island: 974-6025

Maui, Molokai, Lanai: 984-8200

Kauai: 241-3387

<http://www.state.hi.us/doh/anthrax>

**To Report Suspected  
Anthrax Contamination  
Call 911**

### Equal Rights

We provide access to our activities without regard to race, color, national origin (including language), age, sex, religion, or disability. Write or call the programs on the brochure or our departmental Affirmative Action Officer at Box 3378, Honolulu, HI 96801-3378, or at 586-4616 (v/tty) within 180 days of a problem.

Benjamin J. Cayetano, Governor  
Bruce S. Anderson, Director of Health



## WORRIED ABOUT



## ANTHRAX?

Take Precautions,  
but

*Don't Panic*

Recommendations  
of the



State of Hawaii  
Department of Health

November, 2001

## Anthrax Infection

Humans can catch one of three forms of anthrax, cutaneous (skin), intestinal, and inhalation (respiratory).

When anthrax spores are rubbed into broken skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine mist, they grow and cause infection in the skin, stomach, or lungs. Anthrax is very rare in humans and *cannot be transmitted from person to person.*

Symptoms vary depending on exposure, but can begin as flu-like symptoms or a red spot on the skin which looks like an insect bite, turning into a blister, and then a painless ulcer on the skin.

Doctors can prescribe antibiotics for treatment of the disease. Treatment is most effective when it is started early.

Antibiotics should NOT be taken unless there is a good reason to believe that you have been exposed to anthrax. Antibiotics can have serious side effects and some bacteria can develop resistance to these drugs when they are taken unnecessarily.

Recently, anthrax spores have been sent through the mail to some well known people. We should all take special care in handling suspicious envelopes and packages.

## What Should I Do?

If you find a letter or package that makes you suspicious, follow these steps:

- A. Do not open it. It is safe to leave it undisturbed while you investigate.
- B. *If the package or envelope has a return address, contact the sender to identify the contents.*
- C. *If you cannot find out who sent it,*
  1. Call 911.
  2. If at work, also notify building security and/or a supervisor.
  3. Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope.
  4. Leave the area, close any doors, and prevent others from entering the area. If possible, shut off the ventilation system.
  5. Wash hands with soap and water to prevent spreading potentially infectious material to face or skin.
  6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to public health and law enforcement officials.



Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.

Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others, or allow others to examine it.

Put the package or envelope on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or any contents that may have spilled.

## Personal Protection

Clean hands are the best defense against spreading illness

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap, then rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 15 seconds, being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Rinse your hands well under warm running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows. Turn off the water with a paper towel.
4. Dry your hands thoroughly with a clean towel